



February 7, 2023

The Honorable Chairwoman Melony Griffith
The Senate Finance Committee

RE: SB 145- State Board of Social Work Examiners- Temporary License to Practice Social Work
Position: SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair Griffith, Madam Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express support for SB145. I am submitting this testimony as a licensed social worker on behalf of the Board of Child Care (BCC). My intention is to share how the current licensing regulations have negatively impacted on our ability to deliver critical services to Maryland's most vulnerable families.

Board of Child Care is an independent, non-profit that provides youth and families with a broad continuum of treatment programs, including education, foster care, behavioral health, and therapeutic residential services. Last year BCC Served over 1300 families throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. Operating programs across state lines gives BCC a unique perspective of best practice in each area. BCC has programs in West Virginia where they have already adopted a temporary license to practice social work. Like the amendments proposed in SB 145, qualified individuals can practice under the supervision of an approved clinical supervisor while they are pending licensure. This evolution has allowed for the safe provision of critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic and the national workforce crisis.

Board of Child Care depends on the skill of qualified licensed social workers to meet both regulatory requirements and our treatment paradigm. Over the past three years, BCC has been challenged to employ licensed social workers at the Masters level (LMSW) and Advanced level (LCSW and LCSW-C), both critical to the operations of our programs. As a result, BCC has reduced capacity by nearly 50% in some of our programs. The reduction in treatment options places further strain on an already taxed system. This results in Maryland's youth having their treatment needs met in out of state programs or languishing in emergency rooms or other environments that are not designed to meet their medical conditions.

Several of my team members have experienced challenges in completing the licensing process after graduating with a MSW degree and/or meeting the requirements of advanced licensure.

Reasons have varied by the individual, but some experienced delays with accessing the exam early in the pandemic and continue to have challenges with pursuing advance licensure to practice; others have not been able to pass the test once given access.

In this current national workforce crisis, it is important to have tools available to be responsive when needs are presented. SB 145 allows for the use of a temporary license in the event there is an unforeseen delay in access to testing for candidates that are otherwise qualified to perform the scope of the respective social work credential under the supervision of a certified social work supervisor.

It is for these reasons that I respectfully ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 145. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Nicole Smith, LMSW
Executive Director